

TAMENESS OF WILD ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES F. HOLDER.

When the white man first visited some of the islands of the Southern Hemisphere, he found that many animals, especially the birds, were absolutely fearless. Penguins, albatrosses and others paid no attention to the men as they walked along, and when it was desired to photograph a nest and eggs it was frequently necessary to push the nesting albatross from the nest, the bird merely pecking at the intruder. Darwin describes doves at one island he visited as apparently unable to comprehend that man was an enemy. The birds could be shoved from the limbs before they moved, and even attempted to alight upon the heads of the men. In Kerguelen Land the birds in some of the extensive rookeries refused to move as the men strode along, holding their ground and pecking so violently at the invaders that they were forced to beat a retreat. These birds had never seen a man before, and failed to recognize him as an enemy.

The great auk, that was formerly a fairly common bird on the northeast American coast, had so much confidence in the human animal that it could be knocked down with a club, and even picked up. Some years ago I visited a key on the outer Florida reef where a tern was nesting, and found the birds remarkably tame, though not to the extent that they allowed themselves to be picked up, this being true in the case of several gallinules. The terns were in such numbers on Bird Key that they formed a black cloud over it, at times distinctly visible two miles distant. When I landed the noise was so loud and incessant that the human voice could scarcely be heard, even if words were shouted. It was Babel worse confounded—the incessant clamor of thousands of birds; yet I found that absolute silence could be produced for a few seconds merely by shouting at the top of my voice, whereupon every bird apparently stopped crying to listen; then the furious clamor would be continued. These birds were so tame that they flew so near my head that I could almost touch them, and the noddies on the nest sometimes refused to move, and even allowed me to stroke them.

An interesting instance of the tameness of birds is illustrated in the accompanying photograph, which represents a daily scene on the shores of Avalon Bay, Santa Catalina Island, California. Flocks of gulls follow the steamers to and from the mainland daily, a distance of twenty-two miles, resting on the gold ball at the masthead when weary. At Avalon a large contingent lives the year around except during the breeding season, when they depart to some less frequented shore. The birds are extremely tame, and it is one of the pastimes of tourists and visitors to feed the gulls which flock about them fighting for the food. In the log of one of the early expeditions up the Californian coast Father Torquemada mentions the tameness of the ravens of Catalina. There was a cause for this; the birds were looked upon with a certain amount of reverence by the natives, who never killed them; hence the cunning creatures took advantage of it, and literally snatched fish from the hands of the women as they cleaned them on the sands. Whether the ancestors of the gulls of Avalon to-day were included among these tame birds, and the latter have inherited some of their fearlessness, is not known, but the fact remains that they are remarkably tame, and some old birds permit Vincente, one of the fishermen, to pick them up. The photograph shows the birds waiting for the rejectments of the fishing haul. The fishes are cleaned on the beach, and every portion carried away by the birds, which constitute a sanitary corps of remarkable excellence. Nothing escapes their sharp eyes, and the beaches of the island are kept clean by these flocks of gulls.

The sea lions, which have a rookery here, are also tame and equally valuable. They allow boats to ap-

proach within a few feet of them at the rookery, and pose for their photographs with perfect abandon. In the afternoon, after the fishermen return, they come into the bay and carry off the fish that have sunk to the bottom out of the reach of the gulls. Some of the sea lions are so persistent that I have had one of this herd follow my boat and take the bait when six or eight feet from the boat, so deftly that it was not hooked. A seal would poise upright in the water and dash at the bait as soon as it was tossed overboard. One of the sea lions finally became so tame that it would snatch fish from the hands of a fisherman who was washing them. This perhaps is due



THE TAME GULLS OF AVALON, CALIFORNIA.

to the fact that the animals are protected; no one is allowed to shoot or molest them in any way.

The lack of timidity on the part of the buffalo was one cause of the ease with which it was exterminated, the animals often standing while man approached, only moving off when it was too late. Many elk lose their lives from over-confidence in human beings.

In Florida I found that in certain places—out-of-the-way keys where men were rarely seen—the crabs were remarkably tame. Thus on Garden and Long keys the spirit crab was extremely timid, the islands being visited every day; but on North, East or Middle keys, where the crabs probably never had seen a human being, instead of running they would stand, and when I lay down upon the sands it was not long before numbers were crawling about me, evidently actuated by curiosity.

The whale is generally considered to be a very timid animal, but there are many instances where these huge creatures have apparently been without fear.



TAME SEA LIONS AT SANTA CATALINA.

A voracious fisherman of the New England coast informed me that he had more than once been annoyed by whales, the animal insisting upon following the dory, rubbing against it and lifting it out of water, and undoubtedly would have tipped it over had not the plucky fisherman thrust an old scythe blade, which it happened he had, into its blubber, thus driving it off. The utter absence of fear among whales has often been exemplified on the Pacific coast. A large whale on one occasion joined a ship a few miles out from San Francisco and followed her nearly to South America. Everything that could be done to drive it off was tried, without avail; the whale refused to part com-

pany, and was only driven away when the vessel put into a shallow harbor. A pilotboat was once followed by several large whales. A yachting party known to the writer became becalmed in Southern Californian waters, and four or five large whales played about the vessel for hours, so near that the spray from the "spouting" was extremely offensive, while the trembling motion, the heavings and liftings as the monsters scraped the keel, added not a little to the discomfort, not to say nervousness, of the voyagers.

In rare instances fishes appear to be without fear. This was particularly noticeable in the case of several trunk fishes which I found on the Florida reef in an

old dead coral head of large size. At low tide I could reach from my boat nearly to the bottom of the head by bending over, and in attempting to dislodge some gorgonias which were clinging to the coral I was surprised to see several of the little armored fishes swim up to my hand and permit me to touch them—an act which I often repeated. The mullet is very tame. I have frequently stood knee-deep on the outer reef and had large schools all about me within eight or ten feet, and even when I moved along they were not alarmed. This sociability explains the possibility of taking them with the cast net.

Ancient Babylon.

The members of the Babylonian expedition sent out by the German Oriental Society have, in spite of the heat, wind and dust, held out steadfastly at their post, and have brought to light many valuable memorials which, with those already unearthed, will some day give a faithful picture of the ancient metropolis, its streets, temples and palaces and its social, intellectual and religious life. Up to now four hundred inscribed clay slabs have been found in the center of the ruins of Babylon. Of only two of them are the inscriptions yet deciphered, but they are pearls of Babylonian literature. One tablet contains a great part of a celebrated Babylonian compendium which explains the Babylonian cuneiform characters. It is a very ancient dictionary, of great linguistic interest, and of exceptional value practically. The second tablet contains no less than the litany which was chanted by the singers of the Temple of Esagila on the return of the god Marduk to his sanctuary. Marduk, or Merodach, was the son of Ea, and one of the twelve great gods of the Assyro-Babylonian Pantheon. His temple, Esagila, "the exalted house," became the national sanctuary of the whole empire. He also had a sanctuary at Sippar. He is twice mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah, and in Isaiah, as Bel. It was the custom to sing the litany which has now been found after the periodical procession to that grand pantheon which has been brought to light by the expedition, and which, it is hoped, by the winter will be completely excavated.

In the meantime Herren Koldewey and Andrae have made another important discovery, a temple of Ador, or Nineb, the tutelary god of physicians, hitherto quite unknown.

The German Oriental Society's account of these discoveries, which has just been published, also gives a minute description of an amulet, supposed to protect the wearer from the machinations of the

demon Labartu. Labartu was an ashen hued being who made people pale with terror, drank human blood, caused great sorrow, and was accompanied by a black dog. This amulet was once hung round a child's neck in order to drive off the demon.

It has been decided by the directors of the Hamburg-American Line to increase the capital of the company by \$4,000,000, in order to pay for steamers at present under construction. Of these steamers ten have a collective tonnage of 77,730. When completed the vessels will increase the number of Hamburg-American liners to 127, and the total tonnage to 630,091.